

Professional Portfolios and the Hiring Practices of Principals

An Honors Thesis (HONRS 499)

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## **Abstract**

This research project was undertaken to determine what information elementary school principals in Indiana use to make hiring decisions and the role professional portfolios play in this process. To help answer this question, an anonymous survey was mailed to 100 principals throughout the state. The definitions and purposes of a professional portfolio were researched and then discussed in this paper. Other research projects on professional portfolios and their use in the hiring process were also looked at and reviewed. Finally, the results of the survey and research were tabulated and analyzed in an attempt to determine the weight of professional portfolios in the hiring decisions of elementary school principals in the state of Indiana.

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## ***Professional Portfolios and the Hiring Practices of Principals***

Susie sat facing the principal at her first job interview. Her hands were shaking. She was fumbling for answers to his questions. Then a dreaded question came. The principal asked Susie if she had a portfolio he could see. Susie didn't have one. Some of her professors encouraged the development of a professional portfolio before beginning to interview for a job. The principal she did her student teaching with had told her she didn't think it was all that important. That principal had said that portfolios were too time consuming to look at, and that she could tell if she wanted to hire a candidate from the interview. Susie didn't know that not all principals felt this way. She wished she had taken the time to find out more about how principals make their hiring decisions. She also realized professional portfolios are a part of the hiring process. Knowing more about the role of the portfolio and how to put one together would have been very helpful. Susie wished she had been more prepared for her first job interview.

### **Rationale:**

As a senior Elementary Education major, I am looking for my first job. The job search process is very important. It is also difficult and very time consuming. To help focus my time and energy, I decided to find out what information elementary school principals in Indiana use to make their hiring decisions. Recently, portfolios have become a buzzword in the field of education. Their value in the evaluation and hiring of teachers has become a question of interest to researchers and administrators alike. Portfolios do not only have value in the hiring process, but also as a reflective tool for professional development and life-long learning. The knowledge I gained from this research will be helpful to other Elementary Education majors who are beginning the job search process.

## ***Professional Portfolios***

### **Definition:**

There are many ways to define a portfolio. Tierney, Carter & Desai (1991) define the professional portfolio as a purposeful collection of student work that portrays efforts, progress, and/or achievement over time and in authentic learning situations. Another definition is offered by Winsor and Ellefson (1995). They state that the professional portfolio is a fusion of process and product. To them, a portfolio is:

*the process of reflection, selection, rationalization and evaluation, together with the product of those processes. The product is a thoughtfully organized array or collection of artifacts that illustrates professional development, pedagogical expertise, subject matter knowledge, child development knowledge, and professional and personal attributes that contribute to teaching (p. 68-69).*

Professional portfolios encompass all of the components mentioned in both of these definitions. For the purpose of this research, the only thing to add to these definitions is that professional portfolios for teachers are a tool designed to help qualified applicants obtain their first teaching job.

### **Purposes:**

Portfolios are the tools with which teachers can document their practice and reflect upon their work and themselves (Tierney, Carter, & Desai 1991). This is just one of the many purposes of portfolios found in the literature. Antonek, McCormick, and Donato (1997) describe the benefits of a professional portfolio for student teachers.

*...working portfolios are mediational tools that facilitate reflection on actions and beliefs and the construction of a new professional identity within the context of a student teacher's personal and social history (p. 18).*

Courts & McInerney (1993) also comment on the value of portfolios to preservice teachers.

*Although diverse types of portfolios exist, variations of process portfolios best facilitate the preservice teacher's metacognitive sense of learning both in the moment and over time (p. 100).*

The list found in the literature can be cut down to three other purposes. First, portfolios can be used as a communication tool to demonstrate skills, talents, and teaching competencies. Second, they can be used as a tool to help perspective teachers obtain employment. Portfolios provide evidence of how the job candidate operates as a thinking, problem- solving, self-evaluating professional. The third and final purpose of portfolios is to lay the foundation for career long, self-directed, professional development (Winsor & Ellefson, 1995). There are many possibilities for the use of professional portfolios in the teaching field. This project deals with the potential of the portfolio as job search tool.

### **Similar Research:**

The University of Akron completed a study on professional portfolios. This study focused on determining beginning teacher competencies and the creation of professional portfolios by students in the College of Education. In the first part of the study, student portfolios were evaluated by the College of Education based on content, organization and neatness. These portfolios, one ranked high, one average, and one low, were used in the second part of the study. In the second part, the university then decided to research the practical applications of their results. Fifteen administrators were chosen from sixty-five

surrounding school districts. The three previously ranked portfolios in the first part of the study were used for the administrators to review. These administrators were randomly put into three groups. Each administrator was asked several questions about the format, quality, and type of evidence that should be included in a professional portfolio. There was substantial agreement regarding preferred format and quality and the type of evidence to be included (Smolen & Newman, 1992).

In 1986, Bowling Green State University (BGSU) sent out a survey to determine the value of requiring their students to create professional portfolios. One hundred thirty questionnaires were mailed to administrators responsible for the hiring of new teachers in school districts that had participated in BGSU job fairs or interview sessions during the 1985-86 school year. Seventy-two (55%) were returned. The respondents said that there was too little time during the interview to really look at portfolios. However, they suggested using it at a second interview with the building principals. Eighty-three percent of the respondents stated that BGSU should continue the portfolio requirement (Weinberger & Didham, 1987).

A study done in Southern Georgia in which 400 surveys about the components of a professional portfolio were mailed. They were received by schools, district offices, and special entities of 1988 Congressional Districts 1 and 2 in Southern Georgia. Two hundred thirty-four usable surveys were returned. These researchers discovered a list of items considered important by those involved in hiring beginning teachers. Administrators viewed these items differently. The perspectives of these administrators were determined by the grade level each was involved with. Since the researchers received responses from administrators in elementary, junior high, and senior high schools, it was necessary to group the results of the survey into grade levels. The differences between administrators at different grade levels were soon apparent. Administrators at the Jr. High/Middle school placed greater importance on media use than the elementary school administrators. This was just one example of the different

perspectives evident in this survey. From this information, these researchers suggested the importance of tailoring a professional portfolio to the grade level you wish to teach (Williamson & Abel, 1989).

In Utah, New Mexico, and Oklahoma, a study was done to compare the perspectives on professional portfolios by general education administrators, special education administrators, and special education teachers. The goal was to see the differences in five areas. These areas were: 1) knowledge of portfolio assessment; 2) attitudes toward use of portfolio assessment; 3) beliefs about use in hiring decisions; 4) place of creativity in portfolio assessment; and 5) potential components that might be included in an academic portfolio for teachers. The administrators in this study were more in favor of using the portfolios to compare teachers to each other than the teachers were. The teachers seemed to feel that the portfolio was more for them. It could be used to document what they were doing so that they could use this information to improve their teaching. Differences among special and general education were especially evident in the area of components to be included. Special Education teachers mentioned case studies, adaptations, and Individual Education Plans as components that should be included in a portfolio. These items were not thought to be necessary by the general education teachers and administrators. What the researchers discovered was these three groups did have different perspectives based on the contexts in which the individuals surveyed work. (Bull, Montgomery, Coombs, Sebastian, and Fletcher, 1994)

The final study included in this paper was done in Alberta Canada. A survey was mailed to 21 superintendents in the Alberta school zone. Three senior administrative school personnel compared six traditional applications and six applications supported by portfolios from the same applicants. What became evident in this research was the fact that portfolios support the original decisions of the hiring personnel. A principal's original intent may be to hire an applicant. The portfolio supported this conclusion by providing evidence of a candidate's teaching ability. A principal whose first instinct was



not to hire a candidate may also be confirmed by the evidence in the portfolio. This study concluded that the place of portfolios is within interviews of short-listed applicants. ( Winsor, & Ellefson, 1995).

Several conclusions could be drawn from this research. There was basic agreement over what should go into portfolios, but administrators valued each component differently based on the type and level of their school. Administrators from secondary schools placed more emphasis on certain components than do elementary school administrators. Special education administrators have even a slightly different prospective. These studies pointed out the need to tailor your portfolio to match the position for which you are applying.

Little research has been done on the use of portfolios in the hiring process. These studies showed that administrators find value in using portfolios in their hiring decisions. Portfolios were useful in confirming their judgments in whether or not to hire a particular candidate. They gave a more accurate picture of the applicant than the traditional resume or application does. One of the problems mentioned with portfolios is that it was very time consuming to thoroughly review them. Research suggests that the portfolio's place is in the second interview. Once the administrators have narrowed the choices down to 2 or 3 applicants, the principals found portfolios necessary and were more willing to thoroughly review the portfolios of the final applicants.

### ***My Project***

The purpose of this project was to determine how principals in Indiana hire their teachers and how professional portfolios are a part of this process. My research focused on professional portfolios; their definition, components, and purposes. The second part of my project was to discover how principals make hiring decisions. There are several questions I wanted to answer. They were:

1. Is it necessary to have a professional portfolio to be considered for employment?
2. What are the most important components of a portfolio?
3. When is the best time to present your portfolio?
4. What do principals use to make their hiring decisions?

To answer these questions, a one page anonymous survey was sent to 100 principals throughout the state of Indiana. The principals were asked to answer the questions and provide any comments they thought would be beneficial to individuals looking for a job in an elementary school.

### **The Sample**

One hundred elementary school principals were selected using the *1997 Indiana School Directory*. One public school principal was randomly selected from each of the 92 counties. Eight were randomly selected from private elementary schools. There was a mixed representation of principals from large, small, rural, and urban schools. Male and female principals were represented.

### **The Survey**

One hundred surveys were mailed to elementary school principals. A self addressed stamped envelope was enclosed for the recipients to return their responses. All responses remained anonymous unless the participants wished to disclose their identity. The survey was mailed on March 2. It was requested that the survey was returned by March 15, at which time the results would be tabulated. The survey was written in a short answer format with a space for comments following each question. Seventy-five surveys were returned. The tabulated results and the comments offered can be found in the appendix.

## **Analysis**

Each principal placed different emphasis on each component of the hiring process. The important thing to remember was that each principal and school was different and there are no universal right or wrong answers. The information obtained from this project will help prospective teachers prepare for their interviews. This study focused on two things. First, how do principals make their hiring decisions? Second, what is the role of professional portfolios in this process? Even though the portfolio was not the most important factor in the hiring decision, 84% of respondents thought that the job applicant should bring a portfolio to his/her interview.

Principals in Indiana thought it was important to bring a portfolio to an interview. However, not all principals will look at that portfolio during the interview. Administrators were almost evenly divided in whether or not it is appropriate to use the portfolio during the interview. Some principals thought portfolios can be distracting. They would rather just talk to the applicant and not have them shuffling papers. Other principals thought portfolios allow the applicants to more fully answer questions by providing examples from their own experiences.

Principals who responded to this survey thought that the portfolio was most helpful during the second interview stage or in choosing between two or three finalists. According to this survey, a principal was most likely to look at a portfolio during the interview. Several of the respondents indicated they would also look at them before or after the interview also. Many principals found viewing a portfolio a beneficial part of the interview process because the portfolio provided additional information about the candidate.

The professional portfolio could be very helpful to perspective employers, but there were some problems with its use as an interview tool. The problems with it were

that: a) it was too time consuming to thoroughly look at, b) portfolios may cause a storage problem, and c) they were difficult to return to their owners. Other concerns principals have include that a person could hire someone to prepare their portfolio, the portfolio only shows a candidate's best work, and portfolios all look the same, "only the faces have changed."

Principals were asked to rank order components of a professional portfolio that would be the most helpful to them in making hiring decisions. The resume was the most important, followed closely by teaching evaluations. A few principals were quick to point out, however, that many schools can obtain the most important information from confidential placement files or from the application itself. The portfolio can offer more in depth information about the candidate as a teacher, but it is important to remember that a portfolio "should be done well, or not done at all."

The principals were also asked their opinions on seeing a video of the candidate teaching. Many thought that it would be helpful, but said that most candidates don't have one. Principals sighted that benefits included seeing the candidate interact with the children and hearing how the lesson was presented. Concerns included that a video was "too staged." The teacher had practiced the lesson several times, and the students weren't acting normal because there was a camera in the room. Storage and time were also problems that were mentioned regarding the use of videos.

What is the portfolio's role in the interview process? It is still unclear, but approximately 30% of the principals said a portfolio was necessary to obtain the job. The professional portfolio is a resource and interview tool whose potential was just beginning to be realized. Over 80% of the responding principals said the interview was the decisive factor in making hiring decisions. The majority of additional comments provided by this sample related to the interview. Principals stressed the importance of the candidates being able to clearly express their thoughts and opinions. Enthusiasm, attitude, and a child-centered philosophy are necessary to express at the interview. One principal

described the decision making process as a "gut feeling". Principals want to get to know the applicant and find the best match for their school.

### **New Questions**

Like any good research, this project left me with more questions than answers. Are my results representative of the whole state, region, or nation? What is the role of the professional portfolio? Should it be used as a reflective tool for teachers fostering professional growth? Is its place in the interviewing process to be used during the second interview or deciding between two or three finalists? Should the portfolio be used to make promotion and tenure decisions? Should there be a standard format? Could portfolios be done on computers? These are questions that still need to be answered. It is evident that portfolios do have a place in the teaching profession and that there still is a lot to learn about their value.

### **Conclusions:**

There is no required format in putting together a portfolio. Your portfolio should be a portrayal of you, your skills, and your abilities. The research supported the idea that a reflective statement should accompany each item placed in your portfolio. This statement should describe the item and your reasons for placing it in your portfolio. The portfolio you use should represent your best work. It is not a bad idea to select items for your portfolio based on the questions you think you will be asked in an interview. The portfolio components recommended by administrators and faculty from the colleges of education at several universities include: resume, transcripts, student teaching evaluations, lesson plans, unit plans, discipline plan, teacher made tests/materials, and student work. All administrators value these components differently and some may even

like to see things not listed, like a case study, but the important thing to remember is the above list is a great starting point. You can shape your portfolio any way you wish to meet the needs of both you and that prospective employer. Your portfolio is all about you. The greatest value of a professional portfolio is its ability to accentuate an individual's strengths and accurately portray who that person is as a professional teacher.

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## RESULTS OF SURVEY

	Yes	No	No Answer
Do applicants need an application portfolio to be considered for employment?	17	55	3
Would you like to see a video of the candidate teaching?	42	25	8
Should prospective job applicants bring a portfolio to their interview?	9	66	0
Should the applicant leave their portfolio after the interview?	41	26	8
Is it helpful for the job candidate to use their portfolio to answer questions during the interview?	36	30	9

	Before (The Interview)	During	After	N/A
When are you most likely to look at an applicant's portfolio?	19	39	39	2

Rank order the following components of a portfolio according to how helpful in determining whether or not to hire an applicant. (No answer: 5)

resume	2.33	transcript	4.05	teaching philosophy	4.6
discipline plan	5.66	letters of recommendation	3.27	test scores	6.26
evaluations	2.98	lesson plans	6.81	bulletin boards	8.14

### OTHER:

student teaching evaluations, experience related to kids, personal appearance, references, interview, original ideas, organized projects

	Resume	Interview	Portfolio	Other	N/A
What is the most helpful in deciding who to hire for a teaching position?	3	59	3	14	1

### OTHER:

recommendations, seeing them teach, letters of recommendations, references, speaking with the supervising teacher and principal from student teaching, demonstration lesson, personal knowledge of the candidate, teaching performance, the written answers to questions, practical experiences in the classroom, first hand observations and information.



*Do Applicants need a portfolio to be considered for employment?*

- Not mandatory, but helpful.
- Strongly suggest
- No, but it would be helpful.
- Not required, but helps.
- No, but if the applicant is one of the finalists - I want to see the portfolio.
- Interesting and helpful information, but not vital.
- This would be a plus to me, but is not required by our corporation.
- It would help.
- Although it is not necessary, it is helpful and informative.
- (No) but it is helpful.
- The portfolio often contains information about a candidate that an application may not cover.
- Not a requirement, but portfolios can be helpful in an interview as a source of information about the candidate's strengths and experience.
- They all look the same, only faces have changed.
- Not required, but a product helps tell your story.
- I do not require one. I don't know how other administrators feel. Has BSU surveyed personnel/principals to see what they think?
- But it sure can help sell yourself from many other applicants.
- Application and resume.
- No, because I want to talk with the applicant.
- Is nice to have, but I've never required it.
- I would prefer a portfolio, but it isn't necessary to be considered for employment.
- A portfolio can hurt a person during an interview as well as help.
- We need information.
- Not required in our system at this time. Many bring to interview.  
You could hire someone to put a good portfolio together.
- It is not a requirement, but a nice summary of the applicant's "best side".
- Beneficial to view candidate's work and their ability to demonstrate the use of portfolio in interview.
- Not necessarily.

*Would you like to see a video of the candidate teaching?*

- Too staged.
- I would only take the time to look at it if I were down to the final 2 or 3 candidates.
- They could come into play perhaps at the 2nd interview stage.
- Everything helps.
- Not really.
- In advance of interview.
- This could be a very helpful item for candidates.
- This would be nice.
- Often the sound of their voice is a factor for me and that is usually different in a classroom situation.
- Sometimes, particularly when there is difficulty in choosing between top candidates.
- Probably not unless a copy is left.
- It's a good idea, but I've never had an applicant provide a video.
- OK, but not necessary.
- I have never have seen one, but it would be nice, but not a deciding factor.
- This would help to (see) how the candidate interacts with children.
- If the applicant is one that I am considering.
- Too staged.
- Not required, but may help sell your skills abilities.
- I would probably not have time. The most important thing for applicant is how well they do in the interview. Maybe video tape would help people get interviews.
- If I got the list narrowed down to 2-3.
- Not necessary. I am more concerned with first impressions and how a candidate interviews..
- I would, but really not necessary.
- What a wonderful way to see how the person reacts to class.
- Again, this would be a benefit, but isn't necessary for employment.
- A video could be of a lesson that has been practiced and practiced. It doesn't usually show me what I'll see day in and day out.
- No time.
- Not required. Has not been used in our system.
- Kids would not act normal while you are taping.
- Not necessary, although it's a nice touch. Puts additional time pressure on the principal.
- It would be nice, but it would not be a requirement.
- Time usually does not allow for this.

*Should perspective job applicants send their portfolio with their application?*

- They should be used as part of the interview discussion.
- Should be on file with cooperation office.
- No place to keep them - too much!
- We generally receive 100 or more applications for each opening. Including portfolios would be a filing nightmare for personnel.
- In our case, that would be unthinkable. Applications go to the administration building and it would be a major storage problem.
- If interviewed, yes.
- This could get expensive.
- Costly and time consuming.
- Send it or drop it off when the interview is set up so it can be previewed prior to the interview.
- Ideally, it would be great to have more information than an application and resume offer, but realistically we couldn't store them.
- We receive over 500 applications a year. We do not have adequate space to store them.
- Not mandatory, but it helps.
- I would think the cost of this would be prohibitive.
- Cost is too much. I've had some leave it then come back later to pick it up.
- It's better to bring with for interview.
- Absolutely not. There isn't room. We don't want to have to keep track of hundreds of portfolios.
- I see many applications. I do not have time to review portfolios.
- It would be fine at the interview.
- If this is possible, but may bring it the day of the interview. The more information about the candidate, the better for evaluation.
- Too much.
- Bring to interview or put note that would make (it) available.
- If they have one.
- Bring to an interview.

*Should perspective job applicants bring a portfolio to their interview?*

- Portfolios are more than just pictures to look at - they should be part of the discussion that helps tell something about their work.
- Definitely.
- If you have it, bring it. For me it is not a major influencing factor in hiring.
- If they have one and be willing to leave it for a few days and then pick it up.
- This is the time I would want to look at it.
- Doesn't really matter.
- It would be very helpful to have this prior to the interview if possible. It provides some openers for interviews.
- OK - but at this point (I) would not look at it until after the interview.
- It is OK to do this, but hard to really review at that time.
- When the interview is scheduled, an applicant should bring their portfolio prior to the interview.
- (No) If it has been sent.
- It is probably expected by some administrators. The problem is that you can't look at it and talk to the person at the same time.
- Usually makes presentation classier.
- (Yes) But you might ask in advance.
- Not necessarily. I am more interested in the applicant's personal appearance - how they handle themselves.
- If they have one - yes, with examples of student work included in the portfolio.
- Could be useful at that point.
- Bring to interview or put note that would make available.
- If they have one.
- Although it may not be reviewed, the candidate may choose a couple items to share or to refer to.

*When are you most likely to look at an applicant's portfolio?*

- If I could get it the day before, or I would look at it the day after.
- If it is a group interview when 4-5 people are interviewing the applicant.
- I don't like to use them during the interview, but often that is my only choice. If they bring them, I feel obligated to study it and often it is more of a problem rather than helpful.
- I like to discuss the portfolio as a "wrap-up".
- I always have as part of my second interview questions that they write answers down. That is when I look at portfolios.
- Both
- We have done all of the above.
- (Before) If I get one, I don't require it.
- I like for applicant to review or explain it to me.
- (Before) If available.
- Usually to break a tie.
- If an applicant has one - I may look at it during the interview.
- I often ask a candidate to select one item he/she wants me to see and explain why it is that particular item.
- If they get into final pool.
- Beneficial to view candidate's work and their ability to demonstrate the use of portfolio in interview.
- During the interview: Perhaps quickly After the interview: if the candidate is a finalist.

*Should the applicant leave their portfolio after the interview?*

- Upon request.
- If asked to leave it, I would.
- No - unless they would prefer to.
- It is fine for the candidate to offer such. I generally don't keep them however.
- Yes - if requested.
- Yes - if asked for. If I'm not really interested, I would not ask for it.
- Too difficult to return.
- It depends if they can make arrangements to pick it up easily. That is always an awkward situation for me.
- Sometimes: If an administrator whom you feel would benefit from seeing it is not present, they should leave it.
- Not necessary.
- Not necessary.
- I will judge the applicant first - then view any data/material if I am interested in the person.
- Depends on how much time the interviewer has.
- It is fine unless brought in early. It could be picked up with a decision, letter of request or recommendation to the superintendent within a week.
- If requested.
- They should offer to do so, if it has not been provided earlier.
- It keeps you in mind for future openings.
- I would have 20 of them if I did.
- Make the offer, but do not be offended if it is not kept since it was viewed during the interview.
- If possible.
- That is nice.
- Not if I've had a chance to look at it.
- If possible. Please plan to pick up later in the day.
- It allows the administrator to reflect.
- Just make arrangements for it to be returned. This will help the employer if he/she still needs to decide between more than one candidate.
- I don't want to mess around with getting it back to you. I also am very busy and wouldn't take the time to look through it.
- Maybe if asked.
- Not unless they are giving it to me to keep.
- Only if principal wants to see it and doesn't have time during interview session.
- Dependent on whether it needs to be shared with other administrators.
- This is not a requirement.
- So team can view it without being rushed.
- If possible

*Is it helpful for the job candidate to use their portfolio to answer questions during the interview?*

- Portfolios are more than just pictures to look at. They should be part of the discussion that helps tell something about their work.
- Could be useful at times.
- Yes at times. It can serve as a good reference.
- Possibly.
- Depends - their choice.
- Anytime a candidate can show an interview committee his/her work, it helps.
- Although I do prefer responses to be spontaneous, not canned.
- NO Personally - I don't care for the candidate to be searching for things during interviews.
- Possibly.
- If it illustrates a specific point.
- Only if meaningful / necessary.
- I prefer to see how the candidate responds to questions without papers.
- This can be very distracting.
- Not sure.
- I like them to be able to show examples of answer that I ask.
- It's distracting. Besides, candidate should be able to articulate without illustration.
- Depends on the circumstances.
- Examples are always good.
- PERHAPS
- Only if they can find items quickly. It would make a poor impression if candidates couldn't find items.
- Maybe. I want (to) talk to the candidate, the person, who am I talking. To get a feel for the candidate.
- Not a big factor, but adds to answer.
- That would make the candidate look very stupid.
- I want the portfolio to be a secondary and support mechanism.
- Perhaps, if it can be done briefly and it addresses a specific question.
- Can refer to contents, but not spend time on show and tell.

***Rank order the following components of a portfolio according to how helpful each is in determining whether or not to hire an applicant. (resume, transcript, teaching philosophy, discipline plan, letters of recommendation, test scores NTE, teaching evaluations, lesson plans, and bulletin board ideas.)***

- All useful.
- 1st interview then.
- Other areas of interest experiences, willingness to assume extra-curricular assignments.
- Attitude - evidence of flexibility - working with a team- caring about children.
- This is not necessarily the order I would expect for the portfolio.
- Someone to contact personally for evaluation / recommendation is most helpful.
- I look at all.
- I don't typically trust recommendations unless I know the person making them.
- If you haven't taught, you don't have a philosophy yet.
- I will see the resume, transcript, philosophy, letters of recommendation, NTE scores with the application so they are not necessary in the portfolio for our corporation.
- Experience related to kids is Number 1.
- Letters of recommendation with phone numbers.
- Other: Instructional strategies/Parental/Community Involvement/Evaluation Instruments used while teaching. All items checked would be beneficial.
- Most of these items should be obtained from a confidential placement file. The Placement File carries more weight than a portfolio.



*What is the most helpful in deciding whom to hire for a teaching position?*

- You still hire the individual - not paperwork.
- Practical experiences in classroom.
- Before I interview a candidate I need to see a strong academic and experiential background. Then at the interview stage I will look for candidates that fit our building's personality and are compatible with our philosophy. Portfolios could reinforce this process. Also, don't forget that I certainly will call references before I hire anyone.
- Interview - I'm interested first in the person.
- (Interview and portfolio) I couldn't decide between these two.
- Most resumes look good; Portfolios can be viewed as part of the interview process.
- The interview is very insightful to see how an applicant responds to questions.
- I look for poise, sincerity, ability to think on their feet, knowledge of theory and best practice, previous experiences, enthusiasm.
- and teaching performance.
- seeing them teach.
- Letters of recommendation - Personal knowledge of the candidate.
- Resume gets person in door, Interview documents candidate's ability to communicate, Portfolio-example of candidate's work.
- Any first hand observations or information is most helpful.

*Is there anything else related to portfolios or hiring practices that you would like to add?*

- Community Service.
- Dress professional, demonstrate enthusiasm, act interested, have a sense of humor, follow-up letters seem to be important.
- I like the option of placing an individual in a position to see how they handle students on the job. I like doing this to evaluate potential for success.
- The ability to communicate ideas to others.
- Portfolios can be made to "look good" even if the applicant isn't. I put little emphasis on theme. I want to know the person.
- The bigger is not the better! Don't overkill with portfolio..
- Vibrancy and enthusiasm during the interview can often be the difference in getting the job or not.
- The interview is the most important part of the hiring process. The portfolio is an optional item to have during the interview.
- Hiring is one of the most difficult tasks I have. I spend a great deal of time making those decisions. I usually interview 2 or 3 times before making a final decision - Portfolios are not my primary focus - I taught 17 years - administration 13 years - call it a gut level feeling.
- Present yourself well! Some of us still look for the clean, neat, interview dressed candidate.
- I'm looking for bright, alert, enthusiastic, and well prepared teachers. Demonstrate those qualities and your chances for employment are enhanced.
- Portfolios can be helpful for interviewer in determining what kind of skills candidate has in dealing with kids.
- Proper grammar, good attendance, neat appearance, a picture of you with the application, teaching experiences other than school site!
- I always value any contacts previous experience a candidate has had, this would include the principal and supervising teacher from student teaching experience.
- I have found portfolios to be of little value. They are always filled with only the best stuff. They only tell me about the person's creativity at one level.
- NO
- We look for excellent communication skills in speaking and writing. Portfolios should be organized to be a quick and clear reference to the strengths of the candidate as well as a visual communication tool.
- It sometimes helps to not use too plain a format as some judge creativity from portfolios.
- Resume tells me what they can teach. Interview tells me if they can teach it. References tell me others have seen it done. What I look for in an interview is:
  1. Personality / Positive Projection / Kid Centered.
  2. Motivation
  3. Knowledge of subject area / certification
  4. Steps they are taking to remain current in their field
  5. Positive work ethic

6. Honesty

7. Rapport with parents

8. Open to change

- Your professional image as you enter your interview.
- The concept of a portfolio emerged a few years ago. Universities began pushing students to develop a portfolio for the purpose of applying for a job. If this helps an individual get an interview, then it is a productive item. I truly believe that the interview will always be the single most important thing. If the portfolio opens the door for this then it has done its job. I doubt if anyone is hired because of their portfolio. It can help, but it is only a small piece of information. When BSU started testing portfolios, did they ask principals what they thought? Does BSU get local administrators involved in helping students with the job search process? These may be questions that you want to ask the career center. I feel universities need to work more closely with the public schools. Career center people need to get out of the office and into the schools to see what is going on. They should be busting their tails to help the students that they graduate.
- A portfolio is nice to have. Did the applicant put it together? The person doing the interview wouldn't necessarily know. So, the weight of the hiring of a person should be the actual face to face interview. Letters of recommendation are fine and transcripts tell an accurate story. Now everything considered, there is No Sure Way to hire all good applicants. My thirty-three years on the job - Gut Feeling is the best that I've found! Plus reference checks....
- Only send out professional looking letters and resumes. Call ahead to ask to meet a principal. Sometimes I'm put off if someone just shows up and wants my time. Good Luck with Your Thesis!
- There is nothing as reliable as demonstrated performance. I haven't hired anyone I haven't observed and worked with. We have 4-12 student teachers per year at our school, which provides us with many choices.
- Applicants should be confident of their ability, but not arrogant. Applicants should know their strengths and their weaknesses and be able to communicate how they have worked to improve.
- In my opinion, portfolios are a waste of time. I want to see a short, concise resume, a few good references, and an interview.
- I prefer speaking with an applicant as my number one method of deciding on hiring. Appearance is important and so is the ability to communicate with me.
- Applicant must be able to communicate well using proper English and appearance is important during any interview.
- I want to see how a candidate speaks, thinks, acts during an interview. A portfolio shows the best and is not necessarily original to the person who put the portfolio together. A portfolio is a nice piece, but I don't think any more of a person who has one, or any less of someone who doesn't.
- It's a piece, but glitz does not make a teacher.
- It is difficult to get people to answer truthfully vs. giving right answer or what they think you want to hear. I try to ask questions that will call for a strong reaction. E.g., How do you feel about the use of ISTEP to evaluate a teacher? This is something they

should feel strongly about. Beyond it not being legal, they should have an opinion. I often ask if they have read a children's book at the grade level. Then ask a question that would call for an opinion. I do not want to hire a teacher who will always agree with my opinion on something. Good teachers can take a stand and defend it. To(o) often interviews over-all result in "right" answers. That doesn't give me a clue to the person's "spirit".

- Portfolios should be very well done or not used at all.
- Anything that would provide a glimpse of the applicant's personality, "people skills", or how they deal with stressful solutions would be very helpful.
- References are very important. Include contacts who truly know your classroom work.
- We use the "Teacher Perceiver" before determining interviews to be scheduled.
- Honest
- Often times I am looking for someone who is a good match for a specific grade level (both with the children of that age and the other faculty members at that grade level).
- The quality of the resume (contents more important than cutsie) will open the door. The interview and placement file will determine the hiring recommendation. Note personal reference as a final step are equally important. Portfolios are nice, but...??? Due to growth of the schools, I had a great deal of experience in hiring teachers (18 within 10 years). The interview and screening process is extremely important especially when you have 350 applicants for one position! Good Luck!
- Emily, have you read the book- "How to Develop a Professional Portfolio-A Manual for Teachers" By Dorothy M. Campbell (and others) Allyn Bacon ISBN # 0-205-26153-1.

# A Few Suggestions for Teachers Beginning the Job Search Process

## I. The Interview is the most important part of the interview process.

- \*Be Prepared
- \*Research the School
- \*Anticipate Questions
- \*Dress Professionally
- \*Express Yourself Confidently and Clearly

## II. Bring a Portfolio to the Interview

- \*It is a collection of your best work.
- \*It should be put together neatly.
- \*A reflection statement should accompany each element.
- \*It should be user-friendly and begin with a table of contents.

## III. Suggested Components for Your Portfolio

- |                            |                             |
|----------------------------|-----------------------------|
| *resume                    | *lesson plans               |
| *teaching evaluations      | *unit plans                 |
| *letters of recommendation | *bulletin board ideas       |
| *transcript                | *experience related to kids |
| *teaching philosophy       | *student work               |
| *discipline plan           | *original ideas             |
| *NTE test scores           | *organized projects         |

***Your Portfolio is a Reflection of You!***